

Message Text

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PAGE 01 FREETO 03685 150904Z
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6508

UNCLAS FREETOWN 3685

FROM AMBASSADOR

EO 11652: NA
TAGS: AODE, TBIO, SL
SUBJ: LASSA FEVER RESEARCH PROJECT: REQUEST FOR ADDITIONAL POSITION

REF: A-4171, 17 JUNE 75

1. BY LETTER OF OCTOBER 27 THE DIRECTOR OF THE LASSA FEVER RESEARCH PROJECT, DR. JOSEPH B. MCCORMICK, HAS REQUESTED APPROVAL FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN ADDITIONAL AMERICAN MEDICAL OFFICER POSITION AT THE CENTER LOCATED AT KENEMA, EASTERN PROVINCE.

2. JUSTIFICATION PER ATTACHMENT A, DEPAIRGRAM A-4171, 17 JUNE 75:

A. CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL, USPHS

B. MEDICAL OFFICER

C. ASSIST DIRECTOR IN CARRYING OUT DIAGNOSTIC AND RESEARCH STUDIES. CONTACTS WILL BE CHIEFLY WITH MINISTRY OF HEALTH OFFICIALS AS WELL AS LOCAL OFFICIALS AT KENEMA.

D. PROBABLY 3RD QUARTER FY1978; DURATION UNKNOWN.

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E. FURTHER ASSISTANCE WITH MAIL, POUCH, CASHIER, AND TELEGRAFIC OPERATIONS. THE PROJECT NOW DOES ITS OWN BUDGET AND FISCAL, PERSONNEL, HAULAGE AND CUSTOMS CLEARANCE ACTIVITIES&

F. APPROVED BY SIERRA LEONE CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER, MINISTRY OF HEA8TH. PROJECT HAS CLEAR-CUT SL APPROVAL IN GENERAL.

G. NONE.

H. NOT APPLICABLE.

I. CONSULTATIONS BETWEEN AMBASSADOR AND PROJECT DIRECTOR ONLY.

3. THE LASSA FEVER RESEARCH PROJECT IS ONE YEAR OLD HAVING BEEN ESTABLISHED BY THE CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL (CDC) OF US PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE FOLLOWING NEWS STORIES ABOUT "DEADLY" LASSA FEVER. PROJECT CURRENTLY HAS ONE AMERICAN DOCTOR WHO SERVES AS DIRECTOR, A PCV RESEARCH/LABORATORY ASSISTANT, A PCV ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER/RESEARCHER AND EIGHT SIERRA LEONE EMPLOYEES. PROJECT HAS ALREADY DEFINED CLINICAL SYNDROME OF LASSA FEVER BY STUDYING 154 CASES OVER SIX MONTHS, HAS DEVELOPED PROMISING DIAGNOSTIC TECHNIQUE, HAS COLLECTED 100 UNITS OF HYPERIMMUNE PLASMA FROM RECOVERED PATIENTS (THIS IS WORLD'S LARGEST SUPPLY), HAS DETERMINED THAT FEVER FAR MORE PREVALENT IN STUDY AREA THAN ANTICIPATED (ESTIMATE FEVER ATTACKS BETWEEN 4-15 PERSONS PER THOUSAND PER YEAR AND THAT 20 TO 40 PERCENT OF ALL FAMILY MEMBERS IN STUDY AREA HAVE BEEN INFECTED AT SOMETIME IN THEIR LIVES) AND HAS ESTABLISHED THAT VIRUS RESERVOIR OF DISEASE IS THE MOST COMMON BUSH RAT IN AFRICA.

4. PROJECT PLANS TO DO FURTHER STUDIES ON EFFICACY OF HYPER-UNCLASSIFIED

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IMMUNE PLASMA, OF THE RODENT VIRUS RESERVOIR ITSELF, OF RODENT INFECTION IN CASE HOMES PLUS OTHER STUDIES OF POPULATION AND DISEASE AMONG OTHER EFFORTS. PROJECT ALSO PLANS TO ESTABLISH DIAGNOSTIC AND THERAPEUTIC TRAINING CENTER FOR TEACHING PERSONS FROM OTHER WEST AFRICAN COUNTRIES WHICH ARE SUBJECT TO THE DISEASE.

5. I RECOMMEND THIS REQUEST BE APPROVED. THE PROJECT IS NOT ONLY AN EXTREMELY VALUABLE ONE IN TRACKING DOWN AND FIGHTING A "NEW" DISEASE WHICH MAY WELL BE WIDESPREAD IN AFRICA, BUT IT IS EXCEPTIONALLY USEFUL AS MEDICAL INSURANCE IN PROTECTING AND, IF NECESSARY, TREATING PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEERS AND OTHERS WHO MAY COME DOWN WITH THE DISEASE. IN COMPARISON WITH A DIFFICULT PEACE CORPS MEDEVAC CASE OF A COUPLE OF YEARS AGO, THE PROJECT RECENTLY DIAGNOSED AND TREATED SUCCESSFULLY A LASSA FEVER VICTIM FROM THE BRITISH VOLUNTEER (VSO) GROUP.
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Sent Date: 15-Nov-1977 12:00:00 am
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
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Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
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